

# Kennedy Impressed With Need For Frequent Security Council Meetings, Wider Participation

His Reliance on Policy Group Draws Attention to Structural Changes He Is Making—Seeks Flexibility Rather Than Chain of Command

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PRESIDENT KENNEDY'S increasing reliance on the National Security Council, as evidenced this week by two sessions for recommendations on how to cope with threatened Soviet aggression in West Berlin, is drawing attention to structural changes under way in this highest policy group in government.

Beginning with George Washington, each President has devised his own machinery for obtaining information and advice to help him fulfill his duties as commander-in-chief of the armed forces and his responsibilities for the conduct of foreign relations.

President Kennedy radically revised the formal chain-of-command organization that former President Eisenhower set up to channel defense and foreign policy recommendations from the departments and agencies and to disseminate the operational directives based on presidentially approved policies among the appropriate personnel.

THE PRINCIPAL features of the Eisenhower structure were a major planning staff that prepared the "papers" for approval by the Council and the President and an Operations Co-ordinating Board, that worked out the details of the policy papers, dispersed these details to the affected departments and agencies and checked to see whether the policies were being followed.

President Kennedy abolished the Operations Co-ordinating Board and combined its functions with a reduced planning staff. Under Eisenhower, the official in direct charge of the planning staff and OCB was Gordon Gray, Secretary of the Army in the Truman Administration and director of the Office of Defense Mobilization during the earlier part of the Eisenhower tenure.

The basic composition of Security Council itself is fixed by statute, but Presidents Truman and Eisenhower invited other officials to participate in its deliberations. By law, the President

is chairman. The other statutory members in this administration are Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara and Director of Civil and Defense Mobilization Frank B. Ellis.

Civil defense this week was put under the Defense Department; Ellis, it was announced, will remain as head of a staff planning agency, to be called the Office of Emergency Planning.

In the Eisenhower Administration as many as 30 high ranking officials attended the weekly council meetings, which opened with an intelligence briefing by Central Intelligence Director Allen W. Dulles and followed detailed agency reports.

President Kennedy, shortly after taking office, rescinded the weekly schedule and reduced the number of participants. He said regular sessions with numerous "watchers" was a waste of time and that he would call the council only when important decisions were necessary. He said the bulk of the business of the council could be handled by himself and only the officials directly concerned with the problem.

TO REPLACE GRAY, he selected McGeorge Bundy, dean of arts and sciences at Harvard College, as special assistant for national security affairs, and Walt W. Rostow, professor of economic history at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as Bundy's deputy. White House officials who work closely on policy planning with these two former educators are Theodore C. Sorenson, the President's counsel, and Arthur M. Schlesinger

In the past, the two main bodies of the two branches of the government were sporadic—only a white the session around midnight after a busy House reception. The invasion of Cuba required several hastily called conferences. The disastrous failure of that operation pointed up the shortcomings of the Kennedy NSC organization.

Mr. Kennedy has found that in carrying out major foreign policy decisions, more frequent meetings with participants were necessary for carrying out the approved policies. In addition to the statutory members and the White House staff, he has included regularly attending in his cabinet the Secretary of the Treasury, C. Douglas Dillon, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, Budget Director David Bell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Lyman L. Lemnitzer and information service director Edward R. Taylor.

Military field commanders and American ambassadors often are called to Washington to take part in the discussions so they will have a better understanding of the President's decisions. At present about 30 persons attend and there is a possibility that some meetings will be transferred from the White House Cabinet room to larger quarters in the new State Department building.

Under President Eisenhower, the majority of the planning staff was assigned to the White House. Some were on detached service from their departments, usually State and Defense. In addition to working up the agenda for the NSC session, this group of about 20 experts compiled "country studies" which reported the military strength, diplomatic attitudes and other pertinent facts about the free, the dominated and the captive nations of the world.

THE EISENHOWER OCB was staffed under secretary level, with Gray as chairman and Robert S. Sorenson, former State Department under officer, as the planning director. This group coordinated inter-departmental communications at one time there were 10-12 inter-departmental communications. The NSC staff. In the early part of this group only Sorenson was retained, combining the planning staff with operations. President Kennedy called in the under secretary, to work with the Bureau of National Affairs-Schlesinger. Regularly associated with the staff are Theodore C. Sorenson, the President's counsel, and Arthur M. Schlesinger

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